

By: Muñoz, Jr.

H.C.R. No. 49

CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

1 WHEREAS, The future of Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park
2 is threatened by the proposed construction of a border wall through
3 this treasured site; and

4 WHEREAS, In 1944, the Bentsen family signed over nearly 600
5 forested acres along the Rio Grande to the Texas Parks Board for the
6 consideration of \$1, with the stipulation that the land be used
7 "solely for Public Park Purposes"; it opened to the public as a
8 state park in 1962, and while serving as a wildlife corridor that
9 allows native species to survive, it has drawn people from across
10 the country to observe its diverse fauna; and

11 WHEREAS, Today, as part of the World Birding Center, the park
12 ranks among the nation's premier bird-watching destinations; it
13 attracts some 30,000 visitors annually, with numbers growing by
14 about five percent every year, and it is an important driver of the
15 Rio Grande Valley's ecotourism economy; and

16 WHEREAS, U.S. Customs and Border Protection has notified
17 landowners of plans to build a 33-mile barrier in Hidalgo and Starr
18 Counties; the section in Hidalgo County will consist of vertical
19 concrete river levees topped by 18-foot-tall fencing, as well as a
20 150-foot-wide "enforcement zone" on the river side with a road,
21 around-the-clock lighting, cameras, and sensors; and

22 WHEREAS, Scientists have warned that the construction of such
23 a barrier through this sensitive natural area would devastate
24 wildlife habitat; a border wall would also inhibit access and deter

1 visitors, and it would likely result in the discontinuation of
2 overnight camping and nighttime wildlife viewing; moreover, the
3 proposed barrier would divide the park, isolating the headquarters
4 and visitors center from the area enjoyed by the public and creating
5 serious operational, management, and safety issues; further
6 complicating the issue, if TPWD is no longer able to safely operate
7 the property as a state park, under the terms of the original grant,
8 the land could revert to the heirs of the grantor; closure of the
9 park could also negatively impact the viability of the neighboring
10 National Butterfly Center; and

11 WHEREAS, Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley State Park is a jewel of
12 the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, beloved by state residents
13 and visitors from far and wide, and it should be protected for the
14 benefit of generations to come; now, therefore, be it

15 RESOLVED, That the 86th Legislature of the State of Texas
16 hereby respectfully urge the United States Congress to oppose
17 construction of a border wall through Bentsen-Rio Grande Valley
18 State Park; and, be it further

19 RESOLVED, That the Texas secretary of state forward official
20 copies of this resolution to the president of the United States, to
21 the president of the Senate and the speaker of the House of
22 Representatives of the United States Congress, and to all the
23 members of the Texas delegation to Congress with the request that
24 this resolution be entered in the Congressional Record as a
25 memorial to the Congress of the United States of America.